

## COLLOQUY

Webster's Dictionary defines colloquy as mutual discourse. Readers are encouraged to submit additions, corrections, and comments about earlier articles appearing in Word Ways. Comments received up to a month prior to publication of an issue will appear in that issue.

In the February Kickshaws, Darryl Francis described a TV program in which Sherlock Holmes answered Dr. Watson's requests for cross-word puzzle entries with comments like "A lemon tree, my dear Watson" or "Alimony Tory, my dear Watson". Joseph T. Hogan of Arabi, Louisiana points out that the phrase "Elementary, my dear Watson" appears nowhere in the Holmesian canon; the nearest, perhaps, is found in The Crooked Man, where "'Elementary', said he" (spoken by Holmes) appears. Examples from other readers include

Alley men! Tarry! (constable's warning to thugs between buildings)  
 Element: terry (laboratory diagnosis of Turkish towel)  
 Ali mentor, he (description of Cassius Clay's trainer)  
 All he meant, Ari! (Jackie O explaining joke to her late husband)  
 Ally men, Tory! (Jefferson warning Federalists about a Whig)  
 Hell! I meant hurry! (husband prodding wife who is late for theatre)  
 Les Goldman, Sherman Oaks, California

Ali mentor, he (the Forty Thieves leader instructs his men)  
 All he-man Toure (in Guinea, Sekou is a brave fellow)  
 Et la montre oreille (a Frenchman holding his watch to his ear)  
 Boris Randolph, Los Angeles, California

A lamb in a net array (a new way to catch sheep for shearing)  
 Yell at man, 'Tarry!' (the constable's warning again)  
 Hell, I'm on tour, eh? (angry query of a fatigued rock singer)  
 Yell at my entry (audience response when he comes on stage)  
 Oil amount our way (the tanker broke up on a nearby reef)  
 Philip Cohen, Aliquippa, Pennsylvania

Philip Cohen comments on "An Exchange of Complements" by noting that wordplay is common on computer terminals. In one application, the terminal prints out OPTIONS: SCALRO, identifying six possible program outputs with these letters. Someone decided to make it easier to remember, and rearranged it to OPTIONS: CARLOS. Then it was discovered that repetitions and spaces were acceptable, leading to a number of phrases; his favorite one is OPTIONS: COCA COLA OR COORS.

Errata: Howard Lyons of Toronto, Canada tut-tuts "On page 31 of February 1978 Word Ways, the first die should be 123450, using the ambiguous 6/9 as needed." In "Ignis, Sing I: A Neroic Ode" in the February issue, the penultimate line in "Wed, Roses or Dew" should be "Debase me -- ha!" In "The Longest Palindrome" in the August 1977 issue, write "Mud riddles; wales us" (p.139, col.2, line 6), "Use joy to obsess a man," (p.142, col.2, line 38), "Pal! Leftists umbrage dud nits" (p.146, col.2, line 36), and "Dog anile efts; um-bonal lasses so pistic" (p.147, col.2, line 20). In the February Kick-shaws, George Grieshaber notes that the misplaced BOW PEW in Webster's Third occurs before BOX PLEAT, not BOX PLANT. Finally, in "Six-Letter Transpositions" in the November issue, B. R. Barwell of Bracknell, Berkshire, England points out that the 356412 561423 pattern example is incorrect; STARVE AVERTS is identical with DELTAS LASTED on the next line. As a replacement, how about ONEIDA DAOINE?

Speaking of "Six-Letter Transpositions", Roger Hannahs of Wilmington, Delaware doubts that the commonest examples have been found in every case. For 123654, he proposes WARDEN WARNED or BURDEN BURNED, for 132456, FARMED FRAMED, and for 426531 625143, TINSEL SILENT. No doubt diligent searchers can find others.

Echoing the title of Darryl Francis's article on comparatives and superlatives in the February issue, the cable address for Guinness Superlatives is MOSTEST ENFIELD. Chapter 7 of Arthur Leff's Swindling and Selling (Free Press, 1976) is entitled "The Distanter Drummer". Richard Lederer quotes from Richard Rolle's six-century-old Living (with modernized spelling): "Contemplative life is much inward, and therefore it is lastinger, and securer, restfuller, delightfuller, lovelier . . ." Going from the sublime to the ridiculous, he quotes the TV ditty extolling the virtues of milk: "What makes a brownie brownier? roast beef beefier? a doughnut doughnuttier? Milk does!"

Michael R. Wise of Willowdale, Ontario, Canada, a member of North America's oldest franchised Scrabble club (in Toronto), reports on the rules used by this organization in admitting comparatives or superlatives from the Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary (1973):

- 1) for adjectives of more than one syllable, the comparative and/or superlative must be shown in order to be acceptable
- 2) an adjective of one syllable takes -er and -est automatically if it is listed separately as an adjective, provided no other comparative and/or superlative is shown, and provided a comparative and/or superlative form is not explicitly barred
- 3) if an adjective of one syllable also has definitions as another part of speech merged into the same listing as the adjectival definition, -er and -est are allowed only if the adjectival definition is listed first

MOSTEST is the most glaring example which is admitted under these rules.

In the August 1977 Kickshaws, Maxey Brooke quoted from Verbatim the "wacky conjugation" I steal the keel/I stole the coal/I have stolen the colon. Martha Awdziewicz of San Diego proposes the following:

I smite the kite/I smote the coat/I have smitten the kitten  
 I smite the mite/I smote the mote/I have smitten the mitten  
 I bite the mite/I bit the mitt/I have bitten the mitten  
 I get the ket/I got the cot/I have gotten the cotton  
 I break the take/I broke the toque/I have broken the token  
 I take the bake/I took the book/I have taken the bacon

A "ket" is a fleece of wool (Webster's Third).

Edward Wolpow appends another footnote to George Scheetz's "Onomasticon I" in the August 1977 issue, observing that DIONYM and TRIONYM have the adjectives DIONYMAL and TRIONYMAL, but there is no -onym noun corresponding to TETRONYMAL (having four names). Richard Lederer of Concord, New Hampshire has discovered ACH-THRONYM (an opprobrious name) in the Abridged Edition of H. L. Mencken's The American Language. Boris Randolph notes that the anonyms of several notables are English words: Albert Camus (sumac), John Dennis (sinned), Christopher Smart (trams), John Reed (deer), Walter Pater (retap), Artemus Ward (draw).

In the May 1977 issue of the National Puzzlers' League publication, The Enigma, Charles Holding of Silver Spring, Maryland, exhibits a previously-unknown 15-letter well-mixed transposition in Webster's Second: ROMANTICALITIES - RECITATIONALISM. Only three other examples of this length are known, all given in "Long Well-Mixed Transposals" in the February 1976 Word Ways.

Darryl Francis updates Merlin X. Houdini's "Living Terror" and "Natural Horrors" with a handful of new phobias from Joy Melville's Phobias and Obsessions (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1977): ALEKTOROPHOBIA is the fear of chickens, FRIGOPHOBIA is the fear of cold, BATRACHOPHOBIA is the fear of reptiles, and SPHEK-SOPHOBIA is the fear of wasps.

Richard Lederer writes that readers of "Four Will Get You Five" in the February Word Ways might be interested to know that one five-letter word, PIETY, did actually arise from the insertion of a fifth letter in the middle of PITY. In Our Own Words, Mary Dohan writes "Piety was gradually differentiated from pity, with which it had been synonymous, and acquired a religious sense."

William Sunners has discovered the pair (aux, au) below the line in Webster's Second, improving on (Foxx, fox) pair presented in the May 1977 Colloquy.